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## Origin and history of *cyan-*

### **cyan-**

word-forming element used in science for the carbon-nitrogen compound radical, from a Latinized form of Greek *kyanos* "dark blue" (see [cyan](#)).

The immediate source of its use in science is French *cyanogène*, the name given to the compound radical by Gay-Lussac. He called it that because it first had been obtained by heating the dye pigment powder known as *Prussian blue* (see [Prussian](#)).

The cyanogen radical was one of the first examples of a 'compound radical' and was of importance in the development of structural chemistry during the next forty years. [Flood, "Origins of Chemical Names"]

## Entries linking to *cyan-*

### **cyan** (n.)

"greenish-blue color," 1889, short for *cyan blue* (1879), from Greek *kyanos* "dark blue, dark blue enamel, lapis lazuli," probably a non-Indo-European word, but perhaps akin to, or from, Hittite *\*kuwanna(n)-* "copper blue."

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1550s (n.), "native or inhabitant of Prussia;" 1560s (adj.), "of or pertaining to Prussia;" from **Prussia** + **-an**. In reference to the language of the earlier inhabitants of (East) Prussia, which was closely related to Lithuanian, by 1888. It was spoken between the lower Vistula and the Niemen and was extinct by the end of 17c. *Prussian blue* pigment (1724) came to English from French *bleu de Prusse*, so called for being discovered in Berlin, the Prussian capital.

All in all, it seems that Prussian blue was synthesised for the first time around 1706 by the Swiss immigrant Johann Jacob Diesbach in Berlin. [Jens Bartoll and Bärbel Jackisch, "Prussian Blue: A Chronology of the Early Years," in *Zeitschrift für Kunsttechnologie und Konservierung* 24, No. 1, 2010]

Early German sources refer to it as *Preußisches Ultra-Marin* and *berliner blau*. *Prussic acid* (1790), is from French *acide prussique*, so called in reference to *Prussian blue* pigment, to which it is chemically related.

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**blue**

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"of the color of the clear sky," c. 1300, *bleu*, *blwe*, etc., "sky-colored," also "livid, lead-colored,"

## **convention**



early 15c., convencioun, "a formal agreement, covenant, treaty," also "a formal meeting or convention" (of rulers, etc.), also "a private or secret agreement," from Old French convencion...

## **again**



late Old English agan, from earlier ongean (prep.) "toward; opposite, against, contrary to; in exchange for," as an adverb "in the opposite direction, back, to or toward a former place or...

## **creature**



c. 1300, "anything created," hence "a thing" in general, animate or not, but most commonly "a living being," from Old French creature "created being; all creation" (Modern French créature), fro...

## **freedom**



Old English freedom "power of self-determination, state of free will; emancipation from slavery, deliverance;" see free (adj.) + -dom. Meaning "exemption from arbitrary or despotic control, civil...

## **world**



Old English woruld, worold "human existence, the affairs of life," also "a long period of time," also "the human race, mankind, humanity," a word peculiar to Germanic languages (cognates: Old Sax...

## **algorithm**



1690s, "Arabic system of computation," from French algorithme, refashioned (under mistaken connection with Greek arithmos "number") from Old French algorisme "the Arabic numeral system...

## **inflation**



mid-14c., "swelling caused by gathering of 'wind' in the body; flatulence," also, figuratively, "outbursts of pride," from Latin inflationem (nominative inflatio) "a puffing up, a blowing into;...

## **dub**



"give a name to," originally "make a knight," from late Old English dubbian "knight by ceremonially

Middle English aboute, from Old English abutan (adv., prep.), earlier onbutan "on the outside of; around the circumference of, enveloping; in the vicinity of, near; hither and thither, from place to...

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